



# SENSES Learning Hub

## **Staff Code of Conduct Policy**

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Dawn Oughtibridge (Director)

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John Fox (Director)

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This policy sets out clear guidance on the standards of behaviour expected from all staff at SENSES Learning Hub. The principles underlying the guidance aim to encourage staff to achieve the highest possible standards of conduct and minimise the risk of inappropriate conduct occurring.

Staff are in a unique position of trust and influence as role models for students, therefore, they must adhere to behaviour that sets a good example to all students within the provision.

Staff also have an individual responsibility to maintain their reputation and the reputation of the provision, both inside and outside working hours and the work setting.

There are certain categories of information which employees must not disclose. Examples include sensitive information which could damage the interests of the provision or its staff or students. Staff should seek guidance from the Director on the categories of information that cannot be disclosed.

All staff members must avoid using information obtained through their job for personal gain or to be used to the detriment of the provision and/or its employees and/or students, or pass such information on to others who might benefit from it or use it to the detriment of the provision and/or its employees and/or students.

Staff must not access SENSES Learning Hub systems to gain information that is not directly related to their role or required in the course of their work

### **Personal Interests**

It is important that staff members are protected from accusations of impropriety. Staff should declare in writing to the directors any financial or non-financial interests which they consider could conflict with the interests of the provision or adversely affect the performance of their duties.

### **Professional Behaviour and Conduct**

Staff are expected to demonstrate the highest possible standards of personal and professional conduct and behaviour and consistently act with honesty and integrity. SENSES Learning Hub expects staff to treat each other, students, parents and the wider community with dignity and respect at all times.

Staff must act in accordance with their duty of care to students and ensure that the safety and welfare of students are accorded the highest priority.

Staff must have regard for the ethos and values of the provision and must not do or say anything which may bring the provision into disrepute. Care should be taken by staff to avoid any conflict of interest between activities undertaken outside SENSES Learning Hub and

responsibilities within the provision. Staff should act in accordance with the policies and procedures at all times.

Where any element of staff behaviour, impropriety or breach of the policies set out in this document, is causing concern then the individual with the concern should inform the Directors. If the concern is with regard to the Directors then the Local Governing body should be informed.

### **Gifts and Hospitality**

Staff members should act with caution when accepting or giving gifts or hospitality and always seek approval from their Directors. All gifts and hospitality received or given must be declared. Any member of staff who corruptly receive gifts will face disciplinary action. However, there may be occasions where students or parents wish to give a small token of appreciation to staff, for example at religious festivities or at the end of the year; this will be acceptable as long as such gifts do not contravene any element of this document.

It is unacceptable to accept gifts on a regular basis or to suggest to students that gifts are appropriate or desired. Money must not be accepted as a gift. If a member of staff is unsure whether to accept a gift, they should consult the Directors.

Other than as stated above, staff must not accept gifts or hospitality from students, parents, carers, actual or potential contractors or outside suppliers. All such gifts/offers of hospitality should be reported to their line manager and recorded or offered up to a suitable means of disposal.

### **Contact with press and media**

In the main, the Directors are the only people who should have contact with the press or media. No member of staff should give a view which is contrary to or critical of the provisions policy. Staff members must seek authorisation from the Director prior to speaking to the media.

Outside working hours, any member of staff is entitled to voice their opinion on issues affecting the local community e.g. at a neighbourhood forum. However, they must avoid any conflict of interest and should not criticise, damage or act in any way against the provision, either verbally, or in making or writing a comment against a published article or a post on social media. Staff members should also be mindful of any potential impact on the provision if they take up or engage in any dispute or complaint with the Council and should avoid such situations where a conflict of interest may occur.



## **Dress and Appearance**

SENSES Learning Hub recognise that dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However, all staff must dress in a manner that is appropriate to a professional role and that promotes a professional image.

Staff should dress in a manner that is not offensive, revealing or sexually provocative and in a manner that is absent from political or contentious slogans.

Staff should dress safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake.

## **Smoking, alcohol and other substances**

SENSES Learning Hub is a non-smoking site. Staff must not smoke on the premises/garden or immediately outside the building. Any member of staff wishing to smoke must leave the grounds.

Staff must not smoke whilst working with or supervising students offsite.

Staff must not consume or be under the influence of alcohol, illicit drugs or other illegal substances on or near the premises.


Staff must refrain from the consumption of alcohol and other substances at events both within the premises and outside the setting.

## **Relationships with Students**

Staff must maintain professional boundaries with students appropriate to their position and must always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe, not open to misinterpretation and applied equitably. Staff should act in an open and transparent way that would not lead any reasonable person to question their actions or intent. Staff should think carefully about their conduct so that misinterpretations are minimised.

Staff must not establish or seek to establish social contact with students for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. If a young person seeks to establish social contact, staff should not accept that social contact and be aware that such social contact could be misconstrued.

Staff must not develop personal or sexual relationships with students and should not engage in any sexual activity with a student. Sexual activity does not just involve physical contact including penetrative and non-penetrative acts.



In terms of the safeguarding of children sexual abuse is defined as ... 'forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non- contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Staff must not make sexual remarks to a student, discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of, students or discuss a student's sexual relationships in an inappropriate setting or context.

Contact with students should only be through the delivery of what would be considered to be normal school activities. Personal phone numbers, email addresses or communication routes via all social media platforms should not be used and staff should not share their home address with students. If contacted via an inappropriate route the member of staff must inform the Directors immediately.

SENSES Learning Hub staff must not accept friend invitations or become friends with any student on any social media platform. Staff should also refrain from following the Twitter or other similar social media accounts of students or their parents.


## **Infatuations**

It is entirely possible that students or sometimes, their parents, develop infatuations towards members of staff. All such situations must be responded to sensitively to maintain the dignity of those concerned.

Staff should also be aware that such circumstances carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against staff. Any indications of an infatuation towards an individual or another member of staff must be reported to the line manager in the first instance and the Directors as soon as possible.

## **Physical contact with students**

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with students, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. A 'no touch' approach is impractical for most staff and may in some circumstances be inappropriate. When physical contact is made with students it should be in



response to their needs at that time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.

Staff should be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described. Staff should never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent. Always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny. Staff must not engage in rough play, tickling or fun fights with students.

Extra caution should be exercised where a child is known to have suffered previous abuse or neglect. Such experiences may sometimes make a child exceptionally needy and demanding of physical contact and staff should respond sensitively by deterring the child through helping them to understand the importance of personal boundaries.

Physical contact must never be secretive, for the gratification of the adult or represent a misuse of authority.

If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported to the Directors, recorded and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the child's file.

### **Child in distress**

There may be occasions when a student is in distress and in need of comfort as a reassurance. This may include age-appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

Such incidents should always be recorded and shared with the Directors. If a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance, they should seek further advice from the Directors.

### **One to one situation**

Staff working individually with students should be aware of the potential vulnerability of students and staff in such situations. Staff should manage these situations with regard to the safety of the student and to themselves.

### **Transporting students**

In certain circumstances it may be appropriate for staff to transport students offsite, for example activities off site or outings. A designated member of staff should be appointed to

plan and provide oversight of all transport arrangements and to respond to any difficulties that may arise.

Staff will ensure that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. Staff will ensure that the driver has the appropriate license for the vehicle, that the vehicle is roadworthy, has a valid MOT certificate and is appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.

## **E-Safety**

Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social network sites which may bring themselves or the provision into disrepute.

Staff must not make contact with students, must not accept or initiate friend requests nor follow student's accounts on any social media platform. Staff must not communicate with students via social media, websites, instant messenger accounts or text message.

Staff should not make contact with students' family members, accept or initiate friend requests or follow students' family member's accounts on any social media platform.

SENSES Learning Hub acknowledges that staff who are also parents may wish to make contact with other parents, who are friends, over social media. Staff must exercise caution and professional judgement in these circumstances and should not have any contact with students' family members via social media if that contact is likely to constitute a conflict of interest, be to the detriment of the provision, its staff and/or students or call into question their objectivity.

## **Photography, video and images of children**

Some of the Prince's Trust activities involve recording images as part of the units. It is important to take into account the wishes of the student, remembering that some students do not wish to have their photograph taken or be filmed. Written consent is asked for from the parents and students at the beginning of the placement.

Using images for publicity purposes will require the age-appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their parent/carer. Images should not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without their consent. Staff should also be clear about the purpose of the activity and what will happen to the photographs/images/video footage when the lesson or activity is concluded.

Staff should remain aware of the potential for images of students to be misused to create indecent images of children and/or for grooming purposes. Therefore, careful consideration

should be given to how activities which are being filmed or photographed are organised and undertaken.

Particular care should be given when filming or photographing young or vulnerable students who may be unable to question how or why the activities are taking place. Staff should also be mindful that students who have been abused through the use of video or photography may feel threatened by its use in a teaching environment.

## **Confidentiality**

Members of staff may have access to confidential information about students, their parents/carers or their siblings. Staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the given situation, on a need to know basis.

Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a member of staff, a student or their family for their own, or others' advantage (including that of partners, friends, relatives or other

All staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a student is being bullied, this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate procedure. It must not be discussed outside the provision, including with the student's parent or carer, nor with colleagues, except with a member of staff with the appropriate authority to deal with the matter.

Staff have a statutory obligation to share with the head teacher, any information which gives rise to concern about the welfare or safety of a student or that might suggest a student is in need or at risk of significant harm. Staff should pass on information without delay in accordance with SENSES Learning Hub safeguarding policy and procedures and this should be recorded. Staff must never promise a student that they will not act on or pass on any information that they are told by the student.


If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share any information that they possess, they should seek guidance from the Director.

Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the Director..

## **Whistleblowing**

Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, without fear of repercussion.





All staff have a duty to report any behaviour by a colleague which raises concern. Staff should refer to SENSES Learning Hub whistleblowing policy for further guidance. This is particularly important where the welfare of students may be at risk.